COVID-19 Fraud Prevention

COVID-19 is a very serious public health threat to our personal and financial wellbeing. And, there are scammers out there taking advantage of our fears. Here are a few tips from the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) on keeping these scammers at bay.

**Phone scams**

Do not engage with robocalls. These are calls from a recorded message instead of a live person. Scammers use illegal robocalls to pitch anything from COVID-19 treatments to work-at-home schemes. Instead of pressing a number to speak to a live operator, just hang up. Often, pressing a number can opt you in to receiving more robocalls.

**Non-delivery/supply scams**

Be vigilant when shopping online for in-demand products like cleaning, household, health and medical supplies. Scammers are claiming to have these products in stock, then pocketing your money and not shipping your order. If you find yourself in need of making an online purchase, make sure you trust the site or source, pay by credit card and keep a record of your transaction.

**Protect yourself from phishing**

Do not respond to calls, texts or emails from people offering you instant money from the government in regards to COVID-19. Scammers are using these forms of communication to get you to share valuable personal information, such as your account number, Social Security number or credentials to gain access to your financial accounts. Additionally, be aware that scammers may use familiar company names or pretend to be someone you know.

**Please remember most banks and credit unions will never reach out to ask for confidential information–such as your password, PIN or sensitive account information.**

Also, avoid clicking on links from unknown sources. This can give scammers access to download viruses, ransomware or other programs that can lock you out of your computer or device.

**Charity and donation scams**

If you would like to donate to a charity or crowdfunding site, please do your research. If the recipient requests their donation by cash, gift card or bank-to-bank wire, do not do it. Additionally, do not let anyone rush or force you into making a donation.

**Provider / treatment scams**

According to the FDA, there are no approved vaccines, drugs or investigational products currently available to treat or prevent COVID-19. The FTC and FDA are actively issuing letters to companies that are claiming to have preventative products or the cure for this virus.

**Tech support, utilities or lower-your-interest-rate scams**

Be wary of unsolicited offers of financial or other assistance during this time of hardship. Always fact-check information and contact trusted sources for verification. Find out what the U.S. Government is doing [here](https://www.tinkerfcu.org/speed-bumps/speed-bump-u-s-government/).